



Minnesota State University, Mankato
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Honors Capstone Portfolios

Honors Program

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Abigail Eckert Honors Portfolio

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Minnesota State University, Mankato

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WELCOME TO MY
HONORS
PORTFOLIO//

ABIGAIL ECKERT

Hello, and welcome to my electronic portfolio. I am majoring in International Business and Spanish and minoring in Human Resource Management at Minnesota State University, Mankato.



Photo Credits: Laura Beck



Mission Statement

The honors program has guided me forward to begin my career in International Business and Spanish with a minor in Human Resource Management. I pushed myself to learn and succeed in all of my studies. My education was very important and I had so many opportunities to advance my knowledge in leadership, research, and global citizenship. Throughout these past four years, I worked hard to grow, learn, and excel through my academic journey. I plan to use these skills in my future and career goals.

ABOUT ABBY ECKERT



I was born and raised in Spirit Lake, Iowa. I went to high school at Spirit Lake High where I was very involved. I participated in sports, clubs, and academic societies. Minnesota State University, Mankato, was the perfect college for me. It was close enough to home and had a great campus environment. I immediately fell in love with the community, campus, and people! Mankato has allowed me to gain independence and further my education. I look forward to my future career in International Business, Spanish, and Human Resource Management. There are so many amazing opportunities that will allow me to utilize my skills and help me grow. My career goals align with my personal passions. I enjoy spending time with friends, attending sporting events, watching movies, trying new restaurants, and creating art. One of my great passions is traveling and I have experienced some incredible places and cultures. I hope to continue to travel and learn about the world around me. I also enjoy spending time with my family. My parents still live in my hometown, Spirit Lake, with our two dogs. They were both adopted and are definitely part of the family! I have an older brother is attending chiropractic school in Davenport, Iowa. As graduation is approaching, I hold tight the memories that I have made these past few years, but I also look forward to the new chapter ahead.



HONORS PROGRAM

mnsu.edu/honors

HONORS

MINNESOTA STATE MANKATO

WHY HONORS?

The Honors Program has helped me grow both personally and professionally through the competencies and curriculum. With great emphasis on leadership, global citizenship, and research, I have been able to learn and deeply reflect on different experiences. This has been a great opportunity for several reasons. Participating in the Honors Program has allowed me to benefit through new peer relationships, learning through new courses, and becoming a high achieving student.

My personal decision to become an honors student started because I wanted to differentiate myself when looking for a future career. Being an honors student requires time, dedication, and a lot of effort. This honor will separate me from others when applying for jobs or participating in formal interviews. I have always been a high achieving student and push myself to be successful academically. It made sense that I would join the Honors Program to help me be a high achiever, put in extra work, and grow in new ways. The Honors Program has allowed me to experience real life learning and given me a broader vision of future goals. My experience as an honors student has been challenging, but with time and effort, I was able to succeed and reach all the competencies. The Honors Program has helped me create exploration, personal growth, and the ability to deeply reflect on events.

The Honors Program has many benefits. Students are allowed access to more resources and facilities. There is a smaller community of honors students that makes it more personal and unique. The Honors Student Lounge allows honors students to interact and communicate with each other. This is a special place exclusive to honors students. I have really enjoyed the experience-based learning opportunities that have allowed me to dig deeper into learning. The Honors Program has led me to ask more questions in classes, dive deeper into content, and be able to explore academically. I have grown both personally and professionally throughout this program. I have had some incredible opportunities through this program. I was able to be a mentor to new honors students. This allowed me to grow in leadership and build my own philosophy. I have also made connections with faculty, other honors students, and had guidance in my learning career. Another great experience was by taking courses I never expected to take. One of my favorites was GIS (Geographic Information Systems). I knew nothing going into this class, but I made tremendous research and study skills that will benefit me in a future career. The Honors Program expands you into new fields of study outside your major. My study abroad trip correlated with both the Honors Program global citizenship competencies and my Spanish major. This was an incredible opportunity that allowed me to reach several goals academically. There are many competency focussed courses and seminars for students to dive deep into their college experience.

Lastly, the ultimate factor and achievement of the Honors Program is graduating with honors. This is a distinct privilege that honors students should be proud of accomplishing. It shows work ethic, time management, and new skills when going into the workforce. It's another chapter closing, but there are experiences and skills that will continue with me from this program. The commencement will set me apart from my peers and I will be awarded with honors in my college transcript. Overall, this experience has shaped me into a better student and a better worker. I hope to see all these skills and experiences play out in my future career.

HONORS MISSION STATEMENT:

"The mission of the Honors Program at Minnesota State University, Mankato is to create future leaders, researchers and global citizens by providing high ability and motivated students with exceptional learning opportunities, mentoring relationships, and a community of scholars that foster their development as future leaders in a global society."

HONORS LEARNING PLAN:

The honors learning plan is done by honors students each academic school year. The plan includes their field of study, the three competency areas, and how the student will reach their goals in demonstrating and using the rubric levels. I plan on making my goals obtainable and logical for me to achieve. This will also give me the opportunity to share my work and plan ahead for following years.

[Honors Learning Plan \(2017-18\)](#)

[Honors Learning Plan \(2018-19\)](#)

[Honors Learning Plan \(2019-20\)](#)

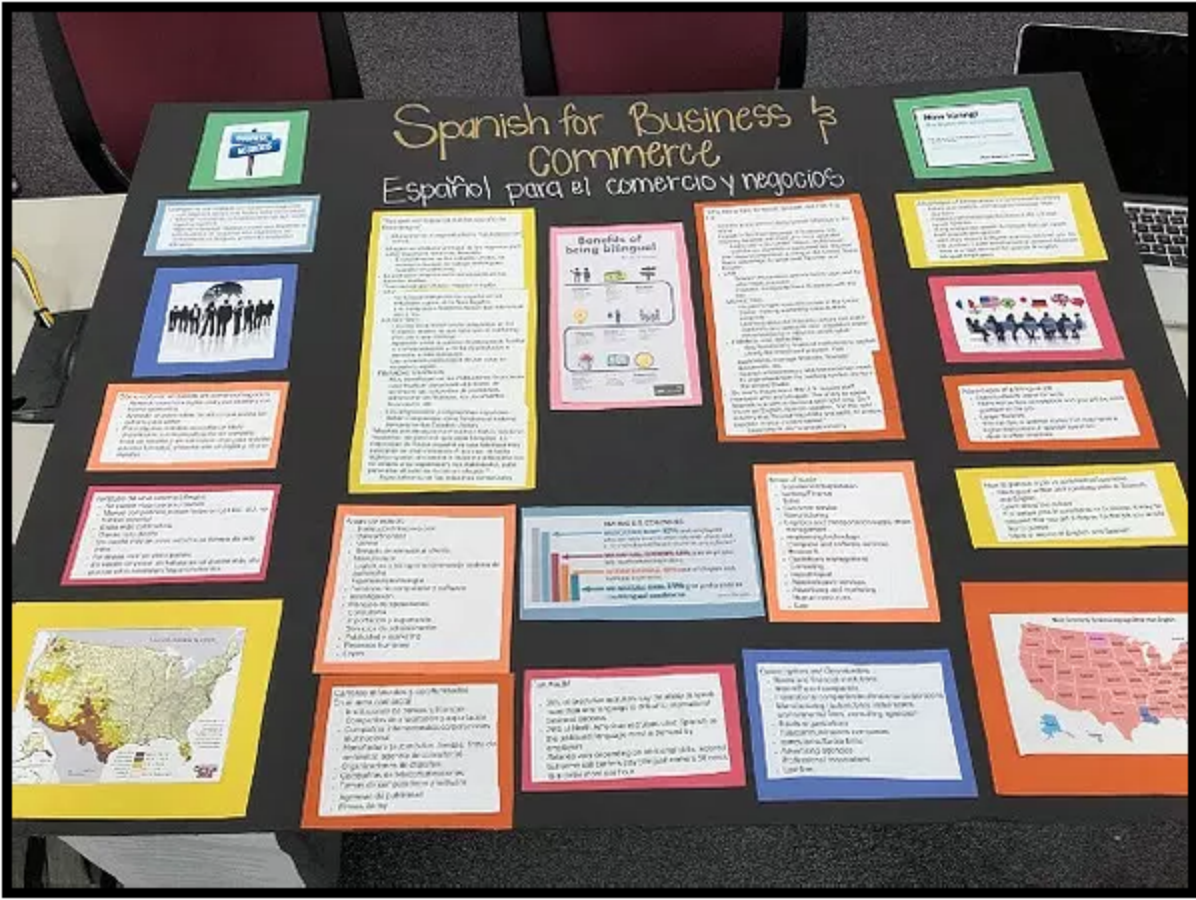
[Honors Learning Plan \(2020-21\)](#)

HONORS 499: CONTRACT WITH SPANISH 450: SPANISH FOR THE PROFESSIONS

For an Honors 400 credit, I chose to do a contract. I received Honors credit for my Spanish 450 course. This allowed me to incorporate the Honors competencies with Spanish for the Professions. I chose to use my evidence of learning on a language and business project. Below is the project and the contract form. I created a poster and presented to the public about how beneficial Spanish is in the business world.

[Honors/Spanish Contract](#)

[Spanish/Business Project Poster](#)



LEADERSHIP



INTRODUCTION

Throughout my college experience, I have had many opportunities to grow my leadership skills. There have been many leadership roles and reflection that I was able to better understand. By learning about my strengths and weakness, I grew to be a better leader. College is a time where students are able to take charge and run with ideas. The honors program allowed me to deepen this knowledge and become a better leader and a better person. I was able to master the competencies of leadership in both values and teams.

COMPETENCY DESCRIPTION

"Upon graduation, honors students will have demonstrated the ability to utilize personal leadership values and guide groups toward a common goal." --- Minnesota State University Mankato Honors Mission & Competency

LEADERSHIP SYNTHESIS ESSAY

To describe my honors leadership experience in one word, it would be: growth. When I began the Honors Program, I expected leadership to be a struggle for me. I was surprised by how much I would grow, learn, and develop in both leadership values and teams. Throughout the past four years, I have an increased appreciation for leaders and hope to continue obtaining the skills I need to become the best role model I can be. A leader is someone who motivates others, seeks out new visions, reaches goals, and has a positive impact on those around them. This is what I have proudly achieved and hope to continue improving and advancing these skills in my future.

My leadership journey began when I was an **Honors Mentor**. This experience allowed me to develop new skills and experience being a role model. Being an Honors Mentor was a very impactful role that allowed me to connect and lead another peer, while creating my own mentor and leadership philosophy. I was able to learn and grow from this experience which helped me build a strong leadership foundation. I accomplished the basic leadership competencies in the honors rubric through this experience. I identified my own personal leadership, I reflected on my strengths and weaknesses as a leader, and identified roles within a group setting. This experience was filled with personal growth that led me to dive deeper into more leadership opportunities.

I later joined the **International Business Organization** to gain better insight within my major, network with professionals, and seek more leadership opportunities. This experience allowed me to observe real life examples of leaders and learn from their model. I was able to reflect upon my leadership strengths and use them to promote IBO through communication and forming relationships. I was also able to achieve more developing competencies on the leadership rubric by reflecting on roles within the group and team settings. I did this by identifying strong leadership qualities and staying involved with the on-campus organization.

I have also been involved in countless group project that allowed me to demonstrate my leadership skills and knowledge. **IBUS 490: International Business Policy and Strategy** was the perfect example of me taking charge and leading others in a positive way to accomplish different project goals. Being a part of a team and leading others has led to many challenges, but also success in the classroom. Many group projects were difficult to manage and there were others that were very efficient and effective. I learned a lot about open communication, creating a productive environment, and working with others virtually. Our Hormel group project allowed me to practice group member skills and abilities to work together to accomplish a final report. I was also able to evaluate effective and ineffective leadership styles within group contexts.

Another major leadership experience that I had was being a **Palmer Bus Aide**. This experience allowed me to master my leadership skills and fully accomplish the honors leadership rubric. I was able to use personal theories of leadership within a job and articulate a general leadership philosophy to guide future collaboration within groups. I was able to demonstrate and see all of my skills come together. I learned a lot from the children that I helped and people I was surrounded by. I could be a great role model for these kids and use my positive leadership philosophy to impact their lives and guide them through future experiences.

Overall, my personal growth in leadership has greatly expanded. I have participated in many activities, jobs, groups, organizations, and teams. Each and every experience has allowed me to learn, practice, and develop better skills. My leadership experiences have made me feel proud of my accomplishments and goals. I am now able to identify good leaders in teams and identify their leadership values. One of the most important competencies that I have gained from the Honors Program is to reflect on yourself. The reflection process is deep and very eye-opening. I am able to look back and see my growth, strengths, weaknesses, and reflections from each leadership experience. As I begin my next chapter, I will continue to develop my leadership skills and plan to exemplify them in my future career to learn, grow, and lead others in a positive way.

Freshman

COMPETENCY ESSAY

After the Leadership Unit in FYEX, there is a lot that I learned. I read many passages about leadership, I got involved in class discussion, and I wrote many reflections. I learned more about myself as a leader and how others behave as leaders. I learned about leadership personalities and how to examine my own. I definitely view leadership differently because of how many types of leaders there are. Everyone leads differently, and I am able to observe that now with the information I have obtained. For this leadership essay, I shared specific points and my thoughts about this unit.

Leadership Essay

CRITICAL INCIDENT JOURNAL

The honors program asked that we keep a journal of events or experiences that relate to each competency. Each journal shares about why it is significant to learn and how it has impacted us. Below are the entries for the leadership competency.

Critical Incident Journal

RESEARCH



INTRODUCTION

Research skills are vital for success in college. Throughout this competency, I have greatly expanded my knowledge and understanding about research. I learned a lot about finding information, ethical research, and how to use quality sources and articles. The research competency was very important to show growth and conduct an undergraduate research project. I was really able to dive deep and master the competencies of information literacy, information synthesis, original research, and dissemination of results.

COMPETENCY DESCRIPTION

"Upon graduation, honors students will have demonstrated the ability to exhibit information literacy skills, synthesize and integrate ideas, produce original research or creative works, and contribute to knowledge."
--- Minnesota State University Mankato Honors Mission & Competency

RESEARCH SYNTHESIS ESSAY

Each honors research competency deepened my ability to conduct and develop important research skills. I had to learn new abilities to find information and use it in an informative manner. This brought many challenges, but I have grown and developed in so many ways. The honors competencies have given me more structure and a strong foundation in building research skills.

Information literacy encapsulates the skills of finding, evaluating, organizing, using, and communicating information. I have displayed this all throughout my college experience in research papers, essays, and projects. I have learned how to ethically and effectively access information on various topics especially in **PHIL224W: Business Ethics**. I was also able to evaluate information and reflect upon it to accomplish a research report. This basic level of research was achieved in my Business Ethics, Ethical Violation Paper. This course enabled me to develop problem solving skills and learn how to gather proper information. Since this course, I have developed more skills and abilities involving research.

Information synthesis is the process of analyzing and evaluating information from various sources. I have made connections between my courses and the information I found in research. I am able to combine this information and create something new. I am able to use multiple sources of information and reflect on the new knowledge and understanding. I displayed this skill in many different research opportunities, especially in **IBUS 380: Principles of International Business** and **IBUS469: International Finance**. These courses included a Project Country Report and Company report where I clearly stated a thesis and used multiple sources of information to create an informational report. I have since improved these skills with more practice and research application.

Original research involves the researcher doing the study. In the beginning, I thought this was going to be very hard for me to accomplish, but the honors program offered a new course that helped me successfully create my own project and research through **GIS & Modeling**. My GIS project was filled with original research that identified a research question surrounding Apple Inc that extended the research question to discover outcomes or answers based on human demographics and store locations. My analysis of Apple stores worldwide allowed me to evaluate store location frequency, area population, age of customers, and wealth of countries around the globe where Apple stores are most prevalent. I conducted the primary research through pinpointing stores and analyzing the data. This completed project gave me a new perspective of research and an incredible amount of new skills I hope to utilize.

Lastly, I explored the dissemination of results through my marketing plan in **MRKT210: Principles of Marketing**. Dissemination of results is important in research because it involves sharing what you discovered and learned. I was able to submit my project to a board of directors and share what I accomplished. This shows growth, creativity, independence, and use of research.

With each level of research, I have grown and built new skills. I have continued to improve and dive deeper into the research process as the competencies got more difficult for me. Each of these examples expanded my ability to conduct research and discover new skills involving the research project. These are only a few accomplishments in my research growth and development. I have come a long way in the past four years and hope to use these skills in the future.

Freshman

COMPETENCY ESSAY

My research essay below explains many things that I have learned about the research competency. We had many guest speakers, readings, and discussions in class to learn about research. I will use research all throughout my time here at Minnesota State University, Mankato. Research is important to learn about because everyone has the ability to do research whatever one is passionate about. I have learned that it doesn't take a scientist in a laboratory to do research; you need to choose a topic of interest and run with it. This competency will greatly help me for my Undergraduate Research Project. Below, I reflect on my experience throughout this topic.

Research Essay

CRITICAL INCIDENT JOURNAL

The honors program asked that we keep a journal of events or experiences that relate to each competency. Each journal shares about why it is significant to learn and how it has impacted us. Below are the entries for the research competency.

Critical Incident Journal

GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP



INTRODUCTION

Global Citizenship is one of my favorite competencies because of my love for other cultures, countries, and people. My majors have given me a great advantage for this competency because they go hand in hand. International Business will allow me to travel and engulf myself in other cultures. Spanish allows me to communicate with people in different countries and continue to learn. At MSU, I have already had many great opportunities to discover myself as a global citizen.

COMPETENCY DESCRIPTION

"Upon graduation, honors students will have demonstrated the ability to exhibit second language and communication competencies and exhibit cultural competency and awareness."
--- Minnesota State University Mankato Honors Mission & Competency

GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP SYNTHESIS ESSAY

Global Citizenship perfectly correlates with my majors of International Business and Spanish as well as my passion for learning about new cultures. Each year in the honors program, I was able to deepen my knowledge and understating of cultural perspectives. I now have an increased self-awareness of my own and other cultures and am able to demonstrate a recognition of the connections between language and culture in communication through both English and Spanish.

Global citizenship encapsulates one's own identity and transcends geography or political borders; I demonstrated this perspective in **ETHN 101-03: Introduction to Multicultural Ethnic Studies**. This course was about diversity and learning about different cultures. I learned a lot about my own culture and those around me. I now have more respect and stronger values about beliefs and cultural identities. This course created a strong foundation for global citizenship and gave me a great cultural experience.

Participating in my Spanish courses and exploring new cultures also helped me demonstrate global citizenship. **SPAN 210W-01: Composition & Conversation** helped me deepen my communication and knowledge and understanding of making connections between languages and cultures. I faced many challenges in this course related to writing and speaking in Spanish. It was sometimes difficult to understand new vocabulary and speak correctly while in class. I was able to improve my skills and successfully accomplish a research paper and presentation about drug trafficking in Mexico. I incorporated research, language, and cultural aspects to learn about a topic in Spanish.

My Spanish communication skills continued to improve as I took **SPAN 301: Topics in Language** course. This course was an in-depth study of phonemics and dialects of the Spanish language. This course definitely advanced my communication skills through studying Spanish dialects around the world and presenting on the Mardileño dialect. Language dialects shape the culture of different areas and helps me gain a better perspective of different customs and beliefs.

SPAN 310-01: Conversation & Composition continued to build my language skills, but also helped me gain even more self-awareness. We learned and talked about different current events in the Hispanic world. This course discussed difficult topics of conversation such as the environment crisis, gender equality, sexuality, racism, and immigration. This class gave me an entirely new perspective on Spanish cultures and guided me to be more self-aware through comparing and contrasting different world norms and biases. My new skills are shown in my final course portfolio.

Another course that helped me achieve global citizenship in the honors competencies was **SPAN 403W-01: Topics in Spanish American Literature**. This course went deeply into Spanish-American literature, specifically in Ecuador. I spent a lot of time reading, discussing, evaluating, and sharing new ideas. I gained a whole new outlook on literature as well as an increased knowledge of the country of Ecuador. I was able to demonstrate my knowledge by presenting to the class about the wage gap in Ecuador compared to the wage gap in the United States. I have a much better understanding and knowledge of cultures from this course, and this will lead to a huge benefit when I become more involved in international business.

The epiphany of my global citizenship journey was through my **Study Abroad** in Summer 2019. I spent four weeks in Alicante, Spain. This experience completely encapsulated global citizenship through self-awareness, communication, knowledge and understanding. I have had a lot of growth and was able to witness and experience a new culture firsthand. My host family taught me so much about the lifestyle of Spain. I took Spanish courses, explored the local markets, communicated with local people, and traveled throughout Spain and Europe. This was a very memorable opportunity that allowed me to master the global citizenship competencies. I hope to continue to learn, grow, and achieve global citizenship in my future. It was so important for me to move my global citizenship experiences beyond the classroom to reach the higher levels of understanding and cultural perspectives.

Freshman

COMPETENCY ESSAY

For each competency we are asked to write a piece for reflection. This global citizenship essay summarizes the activities and readings that we have done for this competency. I have reflected on my experience throughout learning this topic. I have really enjoyed strengthening my skills as a global citizen. The honors program encourages students to attend diversity events and I look forward to advancing my cultural roots.

[Global Citizensip Essay](#)

CRITICAL INCIDENT JOURNAL

The honors program asked that we keep a journal of events or experiences that relate to each competency. Each journal shares about why it is significant to learn and how it has impacted us. Below are the entries for the global citizen competency.

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